



Green Cleaners and Alternatives in School Facilities Services

A Series of Best Management Practices

Our schools are the best arenas to utilize best management practices (BMPs) regarding earth-friendly cleaners. Facilities services houses most of the cleaners involved with the maintenance of the school. By changing the products and methods you practice, children, teachers, and other school employees will benefit from having a healthier environment in which to work and learn.

Getting started

1. Conducting an inventory is the best place to start. (Refer to the BMP for *Conducting a Chemical Inventory*.) These sheets are complete in demonstrating how to conduct an inventory, and what to include.
2. After the inventory is complete, check to see what chemicals are shared between departments. Perhaps these departments should communicate before more is purchased, or brainstorm to come up with less toxic substitutions.

Product and method substitutions

1. Substitute chlorine or bleach-based scouring agents such as those used for toilets and metal cleaning with more earth-friendly ones, such as baking soda. For cleaners for which there is no substitute, use less product or use them less frequently.
2. Cornstarch can be used to shampoo carpets and rugs. Ask your contracted carpet cleaning company to use alternative products.
3. Replace old flooring with new flooring that is chlorine-free and gives off low VOC emissions. One that does not require the harsh cleaning or waxing of some older types of flooring. Borax can be used to clean floors, wallpaper, and painted walls.
4. Substitute harsh solvents with citrus solvent to clean paintbrushes, oil and grease.

Guidelines for storing chemicals

- Store chemicals/cleaners in a room with an impervious floor e.g. concrete, pavement, and tile.
- Cover floor drains if they lead to septic or sewer system.
- Label all chemical containers.
- Covers should be on ALL chemical containers.
- Store chemicals closest to the floor.
- Keep out of reach of children.
- Store chemicals according to hazard types, not alphabetically.



New Hampshire Pollution Prevention in Schools Project

<http://www.des.nh.gov/nhppp/Schools/> or call (603) 271-0878

This document was paid for in part by a Pollution Prevention grant from
U.S. EPA-New England to assist the school sector.